

SSSC meeting

November 21, 2002

(Held in Room 315 of the Governor's Office Building)

Attending:

Keith Russell, Office of Administration
Ron Hooker, Agriculture
John Brunnert, Agriculture
Glenda Verslues, Conservation
Mark Doerner, Insurance
Steve Dunn, Labor & Industrial Relations
Jim Lowery, Mental Health
Stephen B. Moody, Natural Resources
Cherri Baysinger, Natural Resources
Chris Adler, Revenue
Jean Endsley, Transportation
William (Bill) Ridwell, AFSCME
Debbie Pitts, Secretary of State's Office
John Schumert, OCCU-TEC
Mark S. Kaiser, Office of Administration
Janice Steenburgen, Office of Administration
Duane Amos, Transportation

Steve Moody of the Department of Natural Resources chaired the meeting. He began by asking those assembled to introduce themselves. He then gave people time to read the minutes from the last meeting, which were subsequently accepted by the Committee without changes.

Next, Steve invited Keith Russell to give his presentation on safety orientations for O.A.'s new employees. O.A. begins discussing "safety" from the very start. Keith uses the booklet put out by the Department of Public Safety entitled "A Safe Workplace Starts With You." This booklet covers such personal security topics as office security, parking lot security, safety during transit, and what to do if you are a victim. Another step is to let the new employees know who their safety coordinators are, so they in turn can discuss with the new employees matters such as evacuation routes, severe weather safe areas, what to do in case of a bomb threat, and any unique building or workplace issues. New employees may not recognize the relevance of safety, so the orientation is important. They spend about 20 minutes on the orientation, but cover a considerable amount of ground. Steve Moody said that DNR does a four-day orientation for its new employees, during which he gives a one and a half hour presentation on safety. Glenda Verslues said that Conservation does a three-day orientation, of which she takes a day and a half to

discuss safety issues; however, they plan to expand it to a week. One day is spent on driver training.

Next, Ron Hooker and John Brunnert discussed the Department of Agriculture's safety committee. John is the Department's new safety coordinator. They recently held a "safety week" from September 30 to October 4, during which they did such things as putting daily safety issues before employees via e-mail and having Stacy Skiles in to give a presentation (which went very well). They are now having their safety committee meet every two months; however, John was afraid that they might be losing momentum and asked the Committee members if they met more often. Some did. Various members had suggestions for how to maintain momentum in a safety program, such as changing the mix of people and activities, keeping the agency's loss numbers before the employees, keeping written records of meetings so that committees need not "re-invent the wheel" when new personnel join the team and maintaining the commitment of lower, middle and upper management. Steve Moody commented that the SSSC can have an important impact; for example, its efforts on a Return-to-Work program were helpful. Mark Kaiser pointed out it can be tough to maintain momentum when "safety" is not an employee's principle job. Steve discussed the importance of keeping the lines of communication with employees open, citing a recent case where an employee alerted him to the fact that workers were doing daily inspections of each of DNR's many 85 ft. tall water towers without safety harnesses or other safety equipment. John Brunnert pointed out that the Department of Agriculture lacks full-time "safety" personnel, but Ron Hooker said he is able to meet every Monday with the Department's various Division Directors on safety issues, so things are starting to get done. John Schumert complemented Agriculture, pointing out that the personnel making up Agriculture's safety committee are all experts in their fields who understand the job exposures. As a final point, Keith Russell reminded the Committee that while we need to keep things fresh, we also need to review things on a periodic basis, since employees can forget procedures even if they've had training on them at some point in time.

John Schumert then discussed the state's latest statistics on workers' compensation injuries. The "incidence rate" for the state is up, but the "lost work days incidence rate" is falling, which is due in part to the fact that the new return-to-work program is in place. John is working on a way to capture these RTW employees. John included information on individual injuries within Departments, which he reminded everyone is confidential material that should not be distributed outside the Department's safety team. He also passed out materials on the top causes of injuries. For the first time, "combative" injuries exceeded "slips, trips and falls." Manhandling objects is the third highest cause. The Committee members shared some unusual events. Mental Health commented on the problem of deferred maintenance and sewer back ups. Corrections commented on their slip and fall environment: sometimes, inmates are required to mop the floors, but then corrections staff walk through the still-wet areas, perhaps out of spite, sometimes slipping in the process. Also, some facilities' shower floors weren't "roughed up" during construction. John suggested that the members take the statistical data back to their departments to focus on the types of injuries that occur most frequently, in order to solve problems.

After a short break, the Committee heard from Sgt. Paul Reinsch of the Highway Patrol's Troop F. He indicated that there are a number of programs available from the Patrol's speakers bureau; just give them a month's notice and they are usually able to make a presentation. Contact their Public Information Office. They can supply the VCRs, Powerpoint, and so forth. He passed out brochures on winter driving. They also have a defensive driving program known as "Stop the Knock" (i.e., the knock by a police officer at the front door, following the accident). He passed out a brochure on the program that addressed seat belt use, speeding, drinking and driving, and inattention. (They have devices such as "impairment goggles" that are used with this program.) Other programs concern violence in the workplace, a children's program, safety for women, verbal judo (to de-escalate situations), and so forth. The committee members had questions about violence avoidance and the use of pepper mace. This led to some theorizing about the limits of sovereign immunity. Given the complexities of the topic, it was decided to save it as an agenda item for another meeting.

Stacy Skiles of the Capitol Police was unable to attend the meeting due to the need to complete some mandatory training, so Keith Russell filled in. He indicated that Capitol Police now has a dog (Abbie) that is in training to become a bomb detection dog. Contact Stacy if you want to have her give her presentation on handling bomb threats. He recommended having the entire staff (not just the safety coordinators) present, because it may very well be the case that a building will *not* be evacuated if a bomb threat is phoned in, and its going to be important for your staff to know why. They recently did the presentation for some 200 employees at the Department of Agriculture. They gave 30-minute presentations to 30 to 50 people at a time. They discussed how to receive a bomb threat, with reference to the "card" that employees should have under their telephones. One thing the card discusses is keeping the "bomber" on the line. Oddly enough, callers are actually frequently willing to do this, since they are angry and want to "vent." About 98% of the time, the call is only a threat. Law enforcement needs to be alerted, so the employee is going to need to know which law officers to call. Also, when there *is* a bomb, 80% of the time, it is *outside* the building, while 17% of the time they are found at the entrances to buildings. Then, Keith discussed the need for a search by occupants, meaning employees will need to search their own areas for anything suspicious. Once completed, the employees will have confirmed the existence of a safe space for themselves. Keith reminded the Committee that you don't want to wait until the event to pass all this information on to your staff, so arrange for the presentation. Ron and John from Agriculture said the presentation was exceptional.

Next, we took up preparation for the election of officers. No volunteers came forward to take on the position of Secretary. Steve moved that we put out an e-mail soliciting candidates for the various offices with the final vote delayed until the next meeting, to which there was no objection.

Then we had a round table discussion of what the various agencies had done recently.

- Steve Dunn indicated that labor had finally been able to train everyone on whom injuries and hazards need to be reported to. They feel this is *the* most important element in a program.
- The Secretary of State's office is marking a pedestrian crosswalk at their building.
- DNR's Director's office has been distributing weekly safety tips, to which there was positive feedback. There were numerous suggestions from employees. They are getting a department health and safety policy together. They are considering mandatory driver training. They are now checking revenue's records to catch employees who have been suspended or revoked but who have failed to notify the department.
- MoDOT is doing a Quality Assurance Review based on the Governor's nine directives. They are making progress in all their districts. More needs to be done on a "global" level through the SSSC, as a group, to avoid problems. For example, one of their garages has 14 piped-in welding stations with no ventilation. This points to the need for design professionals to take safety into account. Likewise, we need to consider safety when determining bid specifications. The Committee may want to consider suggesting policies in these areas.
- Agriculture has obtained a "buy-in" from their Director. They are working on cleaning out a warehouse that was a complete hazard. They are also working on handrails for the handicapped parking. They are having a problem with having their employees consistently wear their ID badges. Finally, they recently had some powder in envelopes. Members discussed how to respond, such as the importance of having masks and gloves available. Also, suspicious mail should be separated from the rest of the mail. The number of people opening and exposed to the mail should be restricted. If powder is found, the mail should be put in a covered place and the employees should stay put unless their skin or clothes are covered with the powder. Finally, employees should not be allowed to have personal packages delivered to work.
- Corrections has a new Director who has been active. But morale in all facilities is a big problem, due to employees having received no raises but having health care cost increases.
- Revenue discussed their new employee orientation, now called "Revenue Today." Also discussed bringing "older" employees in for refresher courses, and a leadership development program.
- Keith is now the safety coordinator for O.A. He's working on meeting with the safety committees. He plans to update the health and safety handbook. They now have an emergency response team in the Capitol complex; he thanked MoDOT for the orange vests.
- Insurance is contemplating using e-mail to get the safety message out on a regular basis. Mark Kaiser discussed customizable newsletters. Glenda said these are already available on the National Safety Council web site, but you need to read them first to determine if they are appropriate. Also Capitol Police puts out "the Advisor." Mark Doerner asked whether others quiz their employees on safety topics; some do.

- Conservation briefly discussed National Safety Week activities (speed traps, seat belt checks, a personal protective gear show, “Think First,” office inspections). They also have new ATV instructors. They have an Academy of Excellence. They are receiving lots of calls regarding Chronic Wasting Disease, West Nile Virus and tick-borne illnesses. They’ve done some work on “continuity of government.” And finally, they need some guidance on a “trailer” program.

The next meeting will be in the latter half of January.

Minutes recorded by Mark Doerner